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ABSTRACT

Based on the author's observation of the activities of this pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services and a synthesis of the reactions of the conference delegates, this evaluation assesses the extent to which this conference, held in Juneau on March 8-9, 1979, met its own objectives. A discussion of library and information services in Alaska provides the reader with background for the conference. Evaluation goals and procedures are presented, as well as a statement of the goals and objectives of The White House Conference on Library and Information Services and the Alaska conference. The attainment of stated objectives, measured by responses to a participant evaluation questionnaire, is evaluated and followed by a summary of participant comments. A discussion of the success of the conference by seven additional criteria, conclusions, and recommendations conclude the report; appendices include the evaluation questionnaire (tabulated), examples of conference recommendations, and selected references. (JD)

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ALASKA CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

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An Evaluation

1979

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April, 1979

Mr. Richard B. Engen
Director
Alaska State Library
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Mr. Engen:

I am submitting with this letter an evaluation of the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services held in Juneau on March 8-9, 1979. The evaluation of the Conference is a result of my observation of the Conference activities and the synthesis of the reactions of the Conference delegates.

I wish to express my appreciation to you and to the Conference staff for the valuable assistance all of you provided to me. I express special thanks to Margaret Leibowitz, Deputy Director, Alaska State Library, who served as liaison in my working with the Conference.

I wish you the best in the further development of library service in Alaska.

Sincerely yours,

Phyllis I. Dalton

Phyllis I. Dalton
Library Consultant

I. INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services was the culmination of over a year-long process of regional Speakouts as a part of the concentration on library and information services in Alaska. The Speakouts were meetings held by region with locations in Kenai, Juneau, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Sustina, Kodiak, Ketchikan, Bethel, Anchorage and Nome. Each session elected two lay and one library-affiliated delegates to attend the final session in Juneau on March 8-9, 1979. Alternates were also elected. Two exceptions to this number of delegates were Fairbanks which had six delegates and alternates and Anchorage which had nine of each. The Alaska Library Association hosted the sessions in all locations except Bethel and Nome where Chapters of AKLA are still to be formed. A trial run was held in Sitka before the formal program was launched. Some of the resolutions from that conference were incorporated into the Action Proposals developed for consideration in preparation for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services. The elegible voters in the regional Speakouts were all lay persons not involved in the governing of a library and all library persons accompanied by two lay persons.

The top ten Action Proposals which came to the Alaska Conference on Libraries and Information Services in Juneau from the regional Speakouts were, in order of priority, the following:

1. State aid for local libraries
2. Preferential postal rates and improved service
3. Library construction and remodeling funds
4. Federal aid to school, public, college and university libraries
5. Research, Library of Congress; National Library Network
6. Public Information Program about library and information service
7. School library media standards and staffing
8. Library Technical Assistant training program to be statewide
9. Special Services for handicapped, and institution residents
10. Eliminating artificial barriers to public use of public resources

In addition, there were six second level Action Proposals and nine local Speakout Action Proposals. The thirty-six elected delegates from the local Speakouts met in Juneau to discuss the twenty-five Action Proposals and to make recommendations on these proposals for the White House Conference. The delegates met, also, to elect state delegates to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be held in Washington, D. C., October 28 to November 1, 1979. ACLIS was presented by the Governor's Advisory Council on Libraries, the Alaska Library Association and the Alaska State Library

The delegates elected to act on the Action Proposals and to elect the state delegates to the White House Conference represented all local Speakouts and were from many areas of Alaska. The geographical distribution of the delegates to ACLIS was as follows:

Anchorage - 9	Ninilchik - 1
Emmonak - 1	Homer - 1
Bethel - 2	Kenai - 1
Fairbanks - 5	Ketchikan - 3
Richardson Highway via	Kodiak - 3
Delta Junction - 1	Palmer - 3
Juneau - 3	Nome - 3

All of the delegates had comparable knowledge and background in relation to those Action Proposals which had been considered and voted on by each of the local Speakouts. The comment was made by a participant that the local Speakouts maintained serious and concentrated discussion of the issues. There was much local citizen participation in the Speakouts. Some of the Action Proposals were of statewide interest such as, "Develop a report back feature in interlibrary loans," "Material reflecting ethnic cultural diversity to be recorded...available statewide," and "Standards to be developed for community libraries." Some were of rural interest such as, "Villages to be consulted, libraries to be coordinated and established by the State Library." Others were of local concern as, "Nome Public Library to develop a business collection." Some were of both local and statewide

concern as, "Headquarters building for Anchorage Municipal Libraries." The statewide development of library service was a strong element in the Speakout proposals: "State funding for the development of the Research libraries under the statewide plan," "Linkage of existing computer systems of the State and extension to more communities," "Alaskawide data bank for research and reports with regional deposits," "State should consider library service essential and of greatest priority." The library user received particular notice in the proposal that "Local library boards assess needs of non-users." Regardless of the level of library service to which the Action Proposals were addressed, they have a local, state and national impact. Library service development is made up of the localities, regions, states and is a part of the entire national development. The wide range of interests reflected in the Action Proposals developed by the local Speakouts indicates that there is truly diversity in Alaska in its libraries. The common element that ran through all of the proposals was concern for the user, sharing of resources and information. The strong interest in statewide development of libraries indicates the present strength of libraries in Alaska on which future development can be based.

The statistics from the Speakouts at the beginning of the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services were: that over about a two-year period there were nine Speakouts with 400 participants and 210 ballots cast. The local Speakouts provided an excellent backdrop for the Conference in Juneau on March 8-9, 1979.

II. CONTEXT

The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services demonstrates in its content, discussions, action proposals and recommendations that Alaska is looking to the needs of its people in developing library service. These needs are surfacing from the requests of the people or expressed through other valid means. Concerned people are, individually, through their organizations and through the political process, participating in the planning for library service. They are aware of and in contact with both the library user and with the potential user. They are concerned, also, about the non-user.

Public information about libraries is essential; everyone should know what is happening with libraries. Alaska has free, modern library service. It is represented by the various communities served and by types of service. The service is a modern community library; a village library in the bush located in the school or the community building; it is a university library with many resources; a regional coordinator working with the resources and services in a specific region; it is a school/community library providing library service to both the students and to the public; a school library; a boroughwide library service. It is the Alaska State Library providing both support and coordination to Alaska library service. It is a library service with a unified purpose - a reaching of the totality of people - reaching groups of people, reaching individuals. It is providing the best library service in Alaska that reality and the present constraints will allow.

An unevenness of library service exists in Alaska in the quality, quantity and availability of library resources and services. This unevenness occurs for varying reasons - geographic, social, economic and the educational development. It is realized that all people need to be reached - to be reached on their own terms and in ways for which they are ready and to which they can respond - emotionally, socially and educationally. Library resources and services in Alaska are essential components of the educational system. Awareness and understanding of critical social issues are stimulated by libraries and libraries assist individuals in realizing their potential for self development. The development of coordinated

library programs and services with other institutions provides access to the library and information resources of the state and ensures effective and economical service to all library users in the state. Library services in Alaska include in addition to books and other media; family films; art reproductions; book talks; large print books; reference and information service; paperback exchanges; community and school art shows; music and dance programs; exhibits and displays; native language materials; oral history; multi-media facilities; meeting rooms; subject specialists; bibliographies; program planning; Alaskana; story hours; cassette tapes; federal and state documents, to mention a few.

The problems in Alaska in providing library service are similar to those in the United States in general. Libraries began independently, they have developed independently and have recently, in library history, come together into a total library program. While some people have easy access to library resources, others still lack resources and access. Funding at every level needs improvement. There is a need for both enthusiasm and funding for libraries.

The use of the libraries is as varied as the libraries themselves. School students from the elementary to the university level are seeking information and are doing research from the very simple to the very complex. Business, government and other professional groups and individuals are seeking technical and specialized information in their own fields of work. People of all ages are looking for information, education and recreation. Because of the diversity of the communities in Alaska, the question of what is an acceptable level of library service for a particular community is not easily answered. It depends on what the people want, need and are willing to pay for. To decide this, it is important to know who is using the library and how they feel about the service. The people involved in the developing of library service need to understand the changing environment of a community so that the library can serve fully. Because the library has one reason for existence - to serve people - it is important, in selecting books and other library materials, to be aware of the profile of both the present and the future library user. The interest and the needs of the public are guides in

library development.

The libraries in Alaska need to provide adequate library and informational service for formal education at all levels. They should provide adequate library and information service for informal education for the public at large; provide adequate bibliographic access to research and informational resources of the state; provide adequate trained personnel for the varied and changing demands of librarianship; provide quality library service for people through their local communities by use of state and federal aid to improve, develop, strengthen and expand library service.

Libraries traditionally are organized to serve special clientele groups; a school library provides curriculum related materials in support of the educational program; an academic library serves the study and research needs of the college and university faculty and the students; a special library provides library service to the personnel of the agency of which it is a part; the public library provides reading and informational materials and services for the public generally. These clientele are, however, never mutually exclusive. A high school student, for example, may make use of at least three types of library service. A family may well utilize all types of libraries. The materials in the collections of different types of libraries are not unique although each emphasizes resources related to the services provided. There is a substantial overlap among the libraries. Close similarities occur in the qualifications required of their staff members, also. There is no question concerning the need for cooperation when the above factors are analyzed because independence is very costly. A library cannot serve independently even its own clientele. Cooperative sharing of library resources in Alaska will enable all people in a community to have reasonable access to library resources and services.

It is within this context that the delegates to the Alaska Library Conference on Library and Information Services met in Juneau, March 8 and 9, 1979. The State and the National Conferences, each, are by mandate comprised of two-thirds non-library related delegates. All states are conducting similar conferences and

electing delegates to the National Conference. The major interest of the Conference was to determine the needs for and the directions of libraries as well as the future of library service in Alaska. The purpose of the White House Conference is to develop recommendations for the future improvement of the Nation's libraries and information centers and the use by the public. The Alaska pre-conference was held to generate ideas, identify local concerns and to provide the basis of discussion of library issues. The State Conference also provided for the election of six delegates to the National Conference - four lay delegates and two library delegates. Three alternates were also selected including the State Librarian as one of the alternates.

The importance of ACLIS to the overall development of library service in Alaska and to the National Conference cannot be over-emphasized. Because of the time, thought, consideration and action that had been provided in the preparation for ACLIS, the delegates began at a high level of understanding and knowledge of library service on a local, state and national level. The actions taken at the National Conference will have an impact on the state and local levels. ACLIS provided the opportunity for the State of Alaska to formulate and recommend proposals representing issues of importance to Alaska and to forward them to the National Conference. It provided the opportunity to nominate and elect state delegates to the national conference. Both actions will ensure Alaska's active participation in the White House Conference in Washington, D. C.

III. GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of the Conference is the means for assessing the extent to which the Conference met its own specifications - internal validity. The goals of the evaluation are stated as follows:

a. To provide an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services.

b. To assess the extent to which the Conference succeeded in providing a pre-conference resource to the White House Conference.

c. To recommend conference modifications, where indicated, for use with similar programs.

d. To assess the extent to which the Conference contributed to library development in the State of Alaska.

e. To ascertain the overall reactions of the delegates to the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services.

f. To recommend further action related to the dissemination of information regarding the activities of the White House Conference.

g. To indicate how activities of ACLIS can continue to have a positive effect on library development for all Alaskans.

IV. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

This evaluation report is derived from a variety of sources. These include:

a. A review of written material related to the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services including the Speakout results and materials relating to the White House Conference.

b. Attendance at and participation in the Alaska Library Association 1979 Conference just prior to the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services.

c. A Consultant background in the formulation of *Library Service for All Alaskans. A Statewide Library Development Plan.*

d. Background preparation for an evaluation of the Village Library Project headquartered in Nome and including villages on the Seward Peninsula, St. Lawrence Island and Little Diomede Island.

e. An evaluation sheet completed by the Conference participants, (See Appendix A)

f. Attendance at the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services including observation of each of the four discussion groups.

g. Discussion with participants before, during and after the Conference.

h. Review of the materials made available to participants at the Conference.

This evaluation does not contain basic materials describing the Conference. Such materials will be submitted to the White House Conference in the form of the recommendations developed in the Conference and passed by the body of delegates. The activities of the Conference will also be reflected in the participation of the Alaska elected delegates in the White House Conference. The evaluation is concerned with the effectiveness of the Conference and its benefits to library development on local, state and national levels.

V. STATEMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The point of departure for this evaluation is provided by the statement of the goals and objectives for the White House Conference and for the state conferences. These conference goals and objectives are found in *Public Law* 93-568 93rd Congress. S. J. Res. 40 December 31, 1974. Revised edition May 1977. An additional statement of objectives is found in *The Sourdough*, Journal of the Alaska Library Association, January, 1979, particularly on page 1. They provide basic standards by which the Conference effectiveness can be analyzed.

The goals and objectives are said to be:

Purpose: "The purpose of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services...shall be to develop recommendations for further improvement of the Nation's libraries and information centers and their use by the public."

Reasons for holding the Conference are:

1. "Access to information and ideas is indispensable to the development of human potential, the advancement of civilization and the continuance of enlightened self-government."
2. "The preservation and the dissemination of information and ideas are the primary purpose and function of libraries and information centers."
3. "The growth and augmentation of the nation's libraries and information centers are essential if all Americans are to have reasonable access to adequate services of libraries and information centers."
4. "New achievements in technology offer a potential for enabling libraries and information centers to serve the public more fully, expeditiously and economically."
5. "Maximum realization of the potential inherent in the use of advanced technology and coordination of the services of libraries and information centers."

6. "Productive recommendations for expanding access to libraries and information centers will require public understanding and support as well as that of public libraries and information centers."

The specific objectives of the Alaska Conference on Libraries and Information Services are:

a. To insure that the recommendations of the public become a central concern of the White House Conference. To this end, it was mandated that two-thirds of those attending the Conference be citizens not associated with libraries and that one-third of those attending be from the library and information community.

b. To provide the opportunity for the people in Alaska to discuss library related issues pertaining to local, state and national concern.

c. To allow the delegates to formulate recommendations to the National White House Conference and to elect state delegates to that Conference.

The delegates to the State Conference were charged with the responsibility to:

1. Identify needs and define issues - that is, access to library service; funding/costs; role of government; public awareness of library service.
2. Become aware of the greatest potential for library and information services - involvement in the community; technological capabilities; non-traditional services.
3. Determine realities and solutions; role of libraries in society; role of government; funding/costs; organization.
4. Take action - positions for the White House Conference; permanent coordination and cooperation among institutions; keeping attendees involved after the Conference.

VI. ATTAINMENT OF STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

Important evidence of whether the Conference succeeded in attaining its objectives can be judged on the basis of the participants' opinions. Using that criterion, the Conference can be deemed a success. To illustrate, the third question on the evaluation sheet asked whether the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services had attained its stated objectives. The five point rating scale in the evaluation sheet indicated that 1 = Outstanding and that 5 = Poor. While the responses varied, it is clear, on balance, that the delegates found, to a satisfactory degree, that the Conference did very well in achieving its objectives. Modifications of the opinion related to this achievement will be related throughout this report.

Another approach to participant satisfaction was embodied in question number 4 concerning the success of the Conference in reaching the goals of the participants. While not reaching the high rating of the Conference goals themselves the rating was satisfactory, 88% marked 1, 2, or 3 on the evaluation sheet in relation to the success of the Conference in reaching their own goals. 92% saw the Conference as successful in reaching the Conference goals. No one saw either as "Poor" while some saw both as "Outstanding." Again, modifications to this rating will be found throughout the evaluation report.

Another two questions were directed to the actual organization, presentation and procedures of the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services. The first one was concerned with whether the objectives of the Conference were made clear in advance and whether materials were made available. Table 3 indicates that 94% of the participants rated this part of the evaluation 1, 2, or 3, thus indicating that the Conference preparation was very good. A fourth element of the evaluation was Procedure (Presentation of the sessions, opportunities for interaction, expression of ideas and opinions.) Table 4 indicates that the participants rated this aspect of the Conference below the Organization and Presentation but still gave it a very good rating. Again, 94% of the people marked the evaluation 1, 2, or 3 on a five point scale.

Table 1: PARTICIPANTS' RATING OF CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

Rating on 5-Point Scale	Total Response	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 (highest)	10	33	33
2	13	38	71
3	7	21	92
4	3	8	100
5 (lowest)	0	0	100

Table 2: PARTICIPANTS' RATING OF THE PARTICIPANT GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Rating on 5-Point Scale	Total Response	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 (highest)	3	8	8
2	17	52	60
3	9	28	88
4	4	12	100
5 (lowest)	0	0	100

Table 3: ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION

(Objectives made clear in advance; Materials available)

Rating on 5-Point Scale	Total Response	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 (highest)	15	45	45
2	14	43	88
3	2	6	94
4	2	6	100
5 (lowest)	0	0	100

Table 4: PROCEDURE

(Presentation of session, opportunities for interaction, expression of ideas and opinions)

Rating on 5-Point Scale	Total Response	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1 (highest)	13	38	38
2	13	38	76
3	5	18	94
4	2	6	100
5 (lowest)	0	0	100

VII. PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Further evidence of the effectiveness of the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services in all of its aspects is taken from the participants' written and oral comments.

Some participants thought the best part of the Conference was the opportunity it provided "to discuss with lay delegates from other areas" and that the "excitement and interest of the lay delegates was impressive." The diligence of the delegates was highlighted in the comment, "People worked very hard. Many worked after the sessions. They worked on resolutions in their rooms." The small group discussions were highly regarded among the delegates. The informality of the Conference was praised in the comments. "The interaction between the lay delegates and the library community" was a positive element in the Conference. It was constructive for the lay delegates to hear that the library concerns which they have are held in common with concerns from other areas in Alaska. The delegates felt free to amend, adjust and rewrite proposals. "Discussions were open and fruitful." Of the entire Conference, a comment which summed up well was that "People listened to and heard each other - and changed their minds." Many positive comments related to the actual operation of the Conference and the activities of the support staff throughout the Conference. One comment that sums up all comments in this area of the Conference was, "Cooperation of the State Library staff was outstanding." Of the entire concentration on libraries during the more than a year-long period was the opinion "the Speakout has been a real plus for lay people... (I) hope to see the idea continued and expanded."

The Conference could, of course, have been improved. The problem most often mentioned by the delegates was lack of time. The suggestion was made that a three day conference would have been helpful. A three day conference would have allowed more time for discussion in the closing general session. It was thought, by some, that with more time the recommendations to the White House Conference could have been more specific when developed in final form.

Many of the delegates expressed the wish that they could have had the

materials which were available at the Conference, itself, sent to them before the Conference so that they could have been better prepared. Some of the delegates related with difficulty to some of the national concerns. While their importance in library development was acknowledged, the issues did not seem as pressing as some of the state and local concerns. One participant noted that "some of the issues discussed were of institutional concern rather than user concern." It was felt that there was need for more "professional expertise i.e. answering questions of a technical nature so that all participants might have background information."

As to the format of the Conference, some of the delegates thought that a "get-acquainted" reception the evening before the Conference would have been helpful. Others would have liked a longer general session the first morning with a challenging keynote speaker.

Participants' comments taken at random indicate that the entire concentration in Alaska on libraries for almost two years was a satisfying experience - an experience which furthered library development. It was indicated, also, that the entire program was a learning process. The ability to confer with "specialty groups, interests and representatives from remote areas" was a strength of the Speakouts and of the Conference. Ensuring that the bush villages participated in the Speakouts was a problem. One of the improvements needed in the program was the provision of funds for travel and information dissemination to small bush villages.

"The climate of opinion exchange was good" but because resource people were not always available, complete information was sometimes not available in the small discussion groups. The recording of proposals and amendments during the work sessions could have been improved but the "library people were most helpful in presenting all outlooks on ideas." It would have been helpful if participants had had more information before the local Speakouts but the Speakouts were a "learning process for lay people." And finally, it was especially satisfying to the delegates to participate in the "compromising process between urban and rural delegates in an effort to verbalize statewide concerns."

VIII. ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

1. Acquisition of Relevant Information

The support staff made available to delegates a substantial amount of relevant materials which enabled them to work effectively with the Conference. Because these materials were not available in their entirety until the day of the Conference, some of their Conference-effectiveness was lost. The delegates were, however, unusually well-informed at the beginning of the Conference. The regional Speakouts in which they had participated were excellent preparation. They had informed themselves well, also, in preparation for the Conference.

2. Participants

The delegates were from diverse regions of the State and from all types of backgrounds. The delegates were representative of Alaska itself. The rural areas and the urban centers were represented. The body of delegates included more women than men although in some regions, the male delegates outnumbered the female delegates. The delegates covered a wide range of ages but the young adults, youth of high school and college ages, were not represented. The handicapped/disabled individuals were effectively represented. The participants were very aware of the objectives of the Conference and the time constraint. They became an instantly dedicated group at the opening of the Conference determined to have effective recommendations available for the last session and their candidates for the White House Conference nominated.

3. Organization

The Conference was generally perceived by the delegates as well organized and effectively chaired. The assistance of the parliamentarian in the final session moved the discussion and the voting smoothly. As one participant said, "Sessions were intense and productive." The feeling of time being wasted did not surface - rather the constraint of time was a constant motivation to move ahead. The discussion groups operated effectively. Each was individual in its approach and in its make-up. It was noted by a participant that some groups had only one librarian in the group. The chairperson did not dominate the groups but, along

with the group members, constantly moved through the many Action Proposals to be considered in the Conference.

In some instances the librarians were perceived as dominating the discussion. In others, the low key of the librarians was noted. The librarians versus the lay people was a situation seen by some while on another occasion a comment was made concerning the people closely associated with libraries as "very helpful...willing to spend much time explaining."

There were some deficiencies noted in the physical environment by participants. Comments were made to the effect that the temperature in the conference room was uncomfortable and that the ventilation was poor.

4. **Staff Support**

The support staff received many favorable comments in addition to those already noted. "Everyone did a great job in preparing for us and making everything run smoothly for both days." The staff support was described as "excellent." One of the aspects liked best about the arrangements for the Conference was the ability to provide delegates with copies of the proposals as they were amended and rewritten. One delegate summed up the work of the support staff as: "Speed and efficiency of support staff - information dissemination was superb."

As far as the resource people were concerned, they were relied upon for technical information. The only problem which occurred was that they were not always available to the small groups when needed. They were helpful in broadening the perspective of library functions in many instances.

5. **Duration of the Conference**

Many delegate comments related to the length of the Conference. They related, for the most part, to the fact that the time was short. Three days was the amount of time usually recommended. A suggestion was made concerning the desirability for a one-day pre-conference workshop for lay people for briefing on the specific goals of ACLIS. Many would have liked to have had more time for the final session. But there were those, also, who were happy with the expeditious

manner in which all was accomplished in the time originally scheduled.

6. **Dissemination of Information**

As previously indicated, the support staff provided all Conference delegates with copies of materials for their use in the Conference and for future use. The recommendations passed by the Conference are readily available. Further impact will result, as far as information is concerned, from the forwarding of the recommendations to the White House Conference. Reports of activities and action of the White House Conference will be available following that Conference.

7. **Action Proposals**

The Action Proposals were really the "heart" of the Conference. It was primarily to consider, deliberate and make decisions concerning the Action Proposals that the Conference was held. The proposals covered a wide range of levels of concerns and interests. Many of them had been discussed at length in the Speakouts. They were not new to the Conference delegates but were considered in a new context and in a new environment. Although some participants saw the proposals as pre-determined and refined, the groups, in general, approached them as fresh new subjects still to be defined, formulated into recommendations and put to a vote of the body of delegates. While some of the proposals were national in scope, others were both state and national. As was natural for a statewide conference, many of the proposals were statewide in nature but with implications for other states, also. Some proposals were regional in nature, a few local. It was important to the Conference, however, that the most important issues in Alaska library development were a part of the Action Proposals in some form.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

The Conference was successful. The objectives are perceived to have been attained by the greater part of the body of delegates. The real test is, of course, whether the delegates at the conference were successful in proposing effective recommendations, had time to deliberate on these proposals and to pass them by the entire body of delegates for the White House Conference in Washington, D. C. A second test was the ability of the body of delegates to nominate from the floor and elect the lay, library related and alternate delegates to the White House Conference. The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services passed both tests most effectively.

In detail some elements of the Conference should be considered in the Conclusions. The overall impression that many of those present would agree with is the statement on one evaluation sheet that the best part of the Conference was "the interaction between the lay delegates and the professional community." From the opening remarks to the concluding activities, no one seemed to doubt the inevitability or the desirability of providing library service for all Alaskans. Any doubt expressed involved the difficulties in financing and in the implementation of the planning. The present limited financial situation in which nearly all libraries find themselves seemed only to add urgency to the need to share Alaska library resources.

There is a certain inherent lack of cohesion in conferences. It seems to arise primarily from the different perspectives brought to the conference obtained from different experience with library services. Along with the refreshing glimpses of how library service should be provided, there was a communication gap which was, through discussion and interaction, lessened or eliminated altogether. This fact was demonstrated in the varied approaches to the Action Proposal relating to state aid to libraries. The Conference delegates had many different perceptions of how state aid should be provided to libraries in Alaska and how much financing should be involved. Some of this difference comes, of course, from the fact that the development of equitable state aid funding is a complex problem. The open

and reasonable discussion of state aid in the Conference, both in the small groups and in the general session, should be valuable for exposing one point of view to another, if for no other reason. With the pressure of time, however, and the desire to reach an acceptable conclusion, the discussions sometimes did not come to grips with the entire problem. The issue of state aid to libraries was discussed at length in the discussion groups, four proposals were developed and a recommendation was passed by the body of delegates with a nearly unanimous vote. The actual specifics which will make up the program for state aid to libraries will be determined later. It is commendable that the Conference considered this proposal so thoughtfully because it is of vital concern to the libraries in Alaska.

Effective contributions were made throughout the Conference by each of the delegates. All people participated in the deliberations of the Conference. The people representing the bush villages and other small and/or isolated communities reminded other delegates that not everyone has the library resources which are often taken for granted. Those representing areas with many library resources advised that those resources are presently spread much too thin to be as effective as desired.

A commendable new proposal was passed by the body of delegates which read "ACLIS recommends that all local issues identified by local Speakouts be referred by the Alaska State Library on behalf of ACLIS to the appropriate governing body as a formal request to make every possible effort to effect implementation." This was important action on the part of the Conference. Many local issues of importance to Alaska library development were identified during the regional Speakouts. It is vital that these not be lost but that they, whenever possible, become part of library service in Alaska.

In general the high caliber of contribution of the delegates to the discussions reflected well both on the lay delegates and on the librarians. Notice should be given to the organizational expertise of the planning committee and to the effectiveness of the support staff to ensure that the Conference moved along

smoothly. On occasion, participants saw the smooth organization of the Conference as a flaw which impeded the spontaneity of the Conference. For the most part, however, a positive view was taken of this aspect of the Conference.

Physical arrangements of the Conference, on the whole, were very good. A noticeable exception was the conference room where the ventilation was, at times, inadequate. Delegates liked the idea of eating where they pleased. They were especially appreciative of the hospitality provided to the Conference delegates - the reception, the organ concert, the library tour and the buffet during coffee hours and for the Friday lunch. The encounter between people who had a telephone acquaintance or who had only been a "name" to each other was a benefit of the meeting. It was one of the serendipitous results of attendance at the Conference.

There is no doubt that the Conference, in addition, to the obligations to the White House Conference, will go a long way toward developing innovative and established library programs. It provided inspiration and support to those who have the responsibility for keeping quality library service readily available. There are still many barriers in the way of the development, to the fullest extent, of library service to all Alaskans. It was especially commendable throughout the Conference that the delegates recognized the diverse needs of various sections of the state but united on statewide library service in the recommendations to the White House Conference. They recognized, also, the need to be interested in the people who are going to read the materials as well as the materials, themselves. For the most part, the discussions were user-oriented. The Conference not only enabled people interested in libraries to plan but it also provided the opportunity to expand everyone's horizon from the local communities to statewide planning and involvement in national library concerns.

A review of the relationship of the activities of the regional Speakouts and the State Conference shows that of the top ten Action Proposals from the Speakouts, all ten were recommended by the Conference. Some of the proposals were amended or rewritten during the course of the Conference but the intent

remained constant. The additional proposals which were recommended ranged from the improvement and/or establishment of village library service to library improvement networking statewide to the Congressional Research Service. A good balance of concerns resulted from the adoption of the top ten recommendations. Five were primarily of state concern, two were state/national and three were primarily of national concern.

The delegates elected to the National Conference are representative of a variety of regions in the state and of interests in library service. They will, in working in the White House Conference:

a. Identify needs and define issues

b. Become aware of the greatest potential for library and information services

c. Determine realities and solutions

d. Take action

A review of the objectives stated in this evaluation shows that the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services attained all objectives.

1. The Conference did ensure that the recommendations of the public in Alaska become a central concern of the White House Conference. With the public attending the Speakouts and ACLIS, it was assured that the Action Proposals resulting in recommendations would reflect the interests of the public in library development.

2. An opportunity was provided during the nearly two-year period in which the people of Alaska could come together to discuss library related issues. Local, state and national issues were considered throughout the discussions.

3. The delegates to ACLIS had the opportunity to formulate recommendations based on the Action Proposals and on their own knowledge of library development. They had the opportunity to nominate delegates from the floor, to cast ballots for the delegates of their choice and to elect Alaska state delegates to the White House Conference.

The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services attained all stated objectives. It also provided an exciting stimulation to the attainment of excellence by the libraries in Alaska.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed from the observation of the Conference and the evaluation:

1. That the concept of the local Speakout with a culminating statewide meeting be continued in Alaska and expanded.
2. That young adults, high school and college student age, be involved in future meetings.
3. That lay delegates to state meetings have the opportunity to attend a one-day workshop prior to the conference to become acquainted with a basic background of library terminology and concepts - networking.
4. That any such Conference held have a built-in means of implementing the planning for the library development which results.
5. That, other than simple conference ground rules, the discussions be free-flowing.
6. That the issues considered come primarily from the local meetings with relevant current state and national issues considered, also.
7. That a general session be held prior to group discussion sessions to provide any needed information.
8. That the present enthusiasm generated by the Conference be maintained in Alaska with the resultant benefits to library development.
9. That the delegates to ACLIS, the Alaska Library Association, Governor's Advisory Council for Libraries, the Alaska State Library and other interested and concerned groups and agencies keep the delegates to the White House Conference from Alaska informed as to current needs of Alaska in all regions between now and the time of the White House Conference.
10. That the recommendations passed by ACLIS be widely disseminated throughout the State of Alaska so that all will be informed of the actions of those involved in the Speakouts and especially of the

delegates to the Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services.

11. That the delegates to the White House Conference from Alaska make sure that all delegates to ACLIS and all participants in the Speakouts be informed of the actions of the White House Conference as soon as possible after the conclusion of the sessions.

12. That the delegates to ACLIS become continuing advocates for the development of library service to all Alaskans and enlist the help of others in the full development of library service in Alaska.

XI. APPENDICES

A.

ALASKA CONFERENCE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES
Program Evaluation Form for Participants

Please circle appropriate answer: (TABULATED)

1. ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION
(Objectives made clear in advance, materials made available)

Outstanding ---------- Poor
1 (15) 2 (14) 3 (2) 4 (2) 5 (0)

2. PROCEDURE
(Presentation of session, opportunities for interaction, expression of ideas and opinions)

Outstanding ---------- Poor
1 (13) 2 (13) 3 (5) 4 (2) 5 (0)

3. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF STATED OBJECTIVES
(Attainment of Conference Objectives)

Outstanding ---------- Poor
1 (10) 2 (13) 3 (7) 4 (3) 5 (0)

4. ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES
(Attainment of your objectives for the Conference)

Outstanding ---------- Poor
1 (3) 2 (17) 3 (9) 4 (4) 5 (0)

5. IN YOUR OPINION:
a. Things you liked best about the Conference:

---

b. Things that could have been improved:

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6. GENERAL COMMENTS OR IMPRESSIONS:

B.

EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED BY ACLIS RELATING TO SEVERAL LEVELS OF SERVICE

1. The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services recommends that the U. S. Congress enact legislation providing preferential postal rates and improved service through the establishment of a new special "library class" in the system which would give interlibrary loan material first class handling.
2. The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services recommends that local libraries, the Alaska Library Association, the Alaska State Library, and Federal libraries in Alaska and in the nation's capital begin a public information campaign to assure the public's knowledge of library and information resources and services available to every person. To this should be added periodic community surveys and other methods of public input in order to determine user and non-user needs and concerns.
3. The Conference calls on publicly supported Alaska libraries to extend reciprocity of services to those who request them.
4. ACLIS commends the State Board of Education for its adoption of standards for school library/media services as recommended by the Alaska Library Association. ACLIS strongly recommends that every school district including the REAA's that meets or exceeds these minimum standards receive one or more foundation units over and above its basic allocation and that the public school foundation program be amended to so provide. ACLIS further strongly urges that the budget of the State Library be amended to provide specifically for the position of school library/media coordinator whose chief duty will be to implement the program outlined in the school library/media standards now adopted.
5. The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services recommends that Special Services be strengthened at the State level and that grants be

available to assist local libraries to initiate or strengthen services for persons with visual and physical handicaps, homebound, institutionalized, and persons with limited English so that they may truly have access to libraries and information. It further recommends that an imaginative out-reach program be developed to coordinate services and interagency programs.

6. The Alaska Conference on Library and Information Services supports the Educational Telecommunications Consortium in its purpose and efforts. It is important that non-profit educational institutions and organizations be included in the planning and receive a fair share of time in the use of communication systems supported by the state. It is recommended that a minimum of 20% of allocated time be assigned to educational purposes.

C.

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